

**Chayanov, Peasants and Economic Anthropology**

Edited by E. Paul Durrenberger

New York: Academic Press, 1984. xi + 205 pp. \$38.50 (cloth)

*Reviewer:* Nola Reinhardt

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The original contributions assembled in this edited volume develop the work of A.V. Chayanov in a number of theoretical and methodological directions. Durrenberger's introduction summarizes Chayanov's theory of peasant farm operation: the level of production on the peasant farm is determined by the equilibrium between the marginal utility of output and the drudgery of labour, one major influence on that equilibrium level of output being the consumer/worker ratio (pp. 7-12). Overall, the emphasis of this volume is on testing the "correctness" of this theory in a number of peasant communities by using a variety of approaches to the measurement of the consumer/worker ratio, as well as by variously relating the consumer/worker ratio to income per worker, income per consumer, net farm income, the amount of land worked per producer and sown area per household. An article by Durrenberger also tests a detailed specification of the utility/drudgery model against data from several Taiwanese villages.

In general, the studies in this volume report a positive correlation between the consumer/worker ratio and the other variables. However, the approaches range widely in their level of analytic sophistication, from Huang's grouping of households, which offers no statistical test of the significance of the reported group means, to Durrenberger's exceedingly sophisticated model. However, Durrenberger's model is presented with an insufficient definition of terms and in a manner that will be obscure to many readers. The article by Dove is analytically sophisticated both in its approach to measuring the consumer/producer ratio and in its tests of the relation between the consumer/producer ratio and work intensity. Given Dove's characterization of the Kantu economy as a dual one that combines cash crop and swidden cultivation (p. 99), his study is conceptually flawed in its omission of non-swidden activities from the above measures.

Despite the problems indicated here and others which are not mentioned in this brief review, some readers will be intrigued by the approaches to the operationalization and empirical testing of Chayanov's model that appear in this volume. But along with this reviewer, other readers find themselves wondering about the significance of the scattered ethnographic evidence in the volume. First, there is little attempt to test alternative theories which might square equally well with the data in each case. Secondly, in one of the more interesting theoretical contributions, Tannenbaum discusses the criticisms levelled at Chayanov for his analysis of peasant households independent of the broader social and economic system. Despite the efforts of a few of the contributors, the same charge can be levelled against the volume as a whole.

Chayanov's homeostatic model, in which accumulation and internal differentiation are limited by the drudgery of family labour input, is presented with some modifications as the "correct" model of peasant farm organization. But there is currently a fundamental controversy raging over the impact of the spread of com-

petitive markets on the logic of peasant farm organization, and over the competitiveness of peasant farms with large-scale units. This controversy is related to questions about the form in which the peasant household is subsumed within a capitalist economy, and the tendency of peasant communities to experience economic differentiation. Chayanov's theory has played a prominent part in these debates. At this stage of the controversy, it would be very useful to have a coherent assessment of the implications of the Chayanovian analysis for these fundamental questions regarding the future of peasant economy. Unfortunately, although a few important considerations can be mined from the more theoretical contributions, the book does not attempt such a task.

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**Documents sur l'alimentation des Bassari, Boïn et Peul du département de Kédougou, Sénégal oriental**

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Documents du Centre de Recherches Anthropologiques du Musée de l'Homme, n° 7, édition revue et mise à jour

Paris : Laboratoire d'Anthropologie du Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle, 1984. 207 pp.

*Reviewer:* Jean-Claude Muller

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Cet ouvrage décrit l'alimentation de trois groupes ethniques du Sénégal oriental, les Bassari d'Etyolo, les Boïn (un groupe de Bassari islamisés) et les Peul Bandé. Le livre est divisé en trois chapitres dont chacun examine une des ethnies. Les plantes cultivées, les essences sauvages et leurs usages sont répertoriés avec le nom français, le nom latin et le nom vernaculaire. De nombreuses recettes sont données, tant pour la préparation des plats que pour celle des condiments, ainsi que des tableaux donnant le nombre de repas pris par jour pendant un an et leur composition. L'accumulation de tant de données patiemment recueillies est certainement très utile en soi pour la simple connaissance ethnographique mais elle pourra également servir aux diététiciens qui s'occupent des questions d'équilibre ou de déséquilibre alimentaire. Cependant, au delà des faits bruts, les ethnologues y trouveront aussi ample matière à réflexion. Il est en effet bien rare qu'on trouve une liste complète de ce qui est effectivement consommé dans les diverses monographies, celles-ci se contentent de mentionner les cultures principales et de dire qu'on apprête les sauces avec plusieurs ingrédients, ceci sans plus de précision. Ce qui ressort avec force de cet ouvrage—surtout pour les Bassari—c'est une très impressionnante variété de plantes, de fruits, de feuilles et de fleurs sauvages qui entrent dans la composition des repas. Les sauces sont très diversifiées comme le savent ceux qui prennent la peine de manger ce qu'on appelle «la boule» de grains qu'elles accompagnent. Les ethnologues ont souvent taxé cette cuisine à base de céréales de monotone mais, comme ceux qui l'ont adoptée après un certain temps d'accoutumance ont pu le constater, tout est dans la sauce qui, dès qu'on se met à en apprécier la diversité, rend les plats tout autres que monotones. Une autre constatation est le goût que manifestent les Bassari pour l'expérimentation de nouveaux fruits et de nouvelles sortes de plantes cultivées, car c'est un autre mérite du livre